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SOME CHEERING ASPECTS OF MORTALITY.

WHEN eminent men die, we are accustomed to say that the world has lost something; that their country or party is poorer; that none are left to fill their place, and other such expressions. But very seldom do we hear it said that the world gains when great men die; yet we have no hesitation in saying that the world often gains more by the death of leading men than it would do by their living indefinitely, or even much beyond 'the allotted span.' Again, it is not our custom to look forward to the day of our own death as a gain either to ourselves or the world. We somehow think that no one could exactly fill our shoes or act the part we have done; but as a matter of fact, our shoes may be better filled and our part better acted by the generation which follows. This fact ought to humble us a bit; and perhaps we need humbling, for there is just the trace of a tendency among moderns to underrate the men who have immediately preceded them, or who may be going off the far end of the stage as we take our places at the near.

Noble lives have often been spent to little purpose so far as their contemporaries were concerned. The fact is, 'No man is a hero to his valet,' nor is any man 'a prophet in his own country;' and as 'distance lends enchantment to the view,' it is only when the world's best men have been hid from sight in the greedy grave, that their influence has been felt in all its power. We are apt to hold even the oldest and best of our contemporaries in light esteem; but we reverence the ancients. Nay, many of earth's noblest sons have been bitterly blamed, and held up to scorn and derision in their lifetime; and not till death stepped in and took them away, did the world discover its mistake.

A poor shoemaker rises while others sleep, and searches among the wayside weeds of his native lanes, his only inspiration being his thirst for knowledge, and the joy of adding a few plants to

the known flora of his native land. His neighbours deride him, are doubtful of his sanity, and think his life a sad warning to the peasant lads around who may show signs of leaving the beaten path of the monotonous life their fathers trod. Unmindful of scorn, in defiance of fate, he goes forward in the thorny path he has chosen for himself, gaining knowledge that is quite new, making discoveries that were reserved for such as he, and at last becomes possessed of an herbarium famous for containing specimens to be found in no other. All the while he is unheard of, or heard of unfavourably; but when he grows old, and, tottering on the brink of the grave, hands over his precious scraps to the nearest university, he becomes famous. A coterie of appreciative men in far-away London collect something to relieve his pressing necessities, and—the matter ends. But he dies, and *then* the world gains—not the blood and toil stained herbarium, but the stimulating example of a hero's life, which, though it repelled the youth of his own time and district, becomes a burning and a shining light to lighten the path and fire the noble ambition of every youth who reads the story of the heroic struggles which bore him above the swamping waves of prejudice, of poverty, and of scorn.

When that amiable young man the Prince Imperial fell, done to death by Zulu assegais, there arose from nearly every heart in the civilised world a sigh of sympathy for his bereaved mother, and a tear was dropped by many, as they thought of the far-reaching possibilities blotted out by African savages. Yet who can doubt that that tragedy saved a whole nation of men, perhaps for generations, from a host of plotters against the destiny of their own country, not for Bonapartism, but for ends at once selfish, unpatriotic, and unworthy.

In the backwoods of America is born the son of a struggling farmer, who dies ere his son can earn a crust to sustain life. A noble woman, his mother, has a hard battle to fight in the rearing of her family; but bitter though the

conflict is, her heroism gains the victory for her in the unequal contest with want and weakness. Her son, sharing his mother's hard lot, showing her nobleness of character, determines to 'be somebody;' to serve the world in his day and generation; and, by efforts such as only heroes make, rises step by step in learning and in every art that dignifies man. From being a back-woodsman's son and from a condition of penury, he rises 'from high to higher,' till he fills the seat of a great Republic, and becomes

The pillar of a nation's hope,
The admiration of the world.

His influence for good is immense, and he promises to use it well. Suddenly, unexpectedly, a ruffian's shot lays him on his deathbed. The world, first shocked, and then moved by pity, cannot help exclaiming that this is indeed a kingly man. Bright as shone his light, it only lighted one nation before; but the flash of that pistol made him the observed of distant peoples. He dies; and the dead Garfield wields an influence for good such as a thousand living Garfields never could.

But it is not alone by the rich legacies of well-spent lives which men leave us when they die, that we gain. It is often necessary that even good men should be removed, to allow of the world's progress—much more bad men, especially if they wield a far-reaching influence. Of no men is this more true than of statesmen. When in Europe one man once heads a party, he generally remains leader while he lives. The world would not suffer from this, if the leaders of parties would move as the world moves; but they are apt to lag behind. When this is the case—and it is constantly occurring—a country may be brought to the very brink of revolutionary overthrow. At times, nations and dynasties have been saved, simply because death stepped in and removed the obstacle with which the body-politic threatened to come into collision.

Sometimes men pursue a certain course, not that it is right, not even that they think it is right, but because they stand committed to it. Oftener, men hold upon a course that everybody but themselves sees is wrong, believing it to be right; but it is only prejudice that blinds them. This is very apt to be true of us all. When once we have chosen our way, we generally keep on till death stops us. Our religion, our politics, our very prejudices, we rarely modify; and we seldom inquire why we hold certain religious or political creeds. Occasionally, a more than ordinarily strong-minded man has courage to think for himself, and even goes the length of acting for himself; but such cases are comparatively rare. Were men not mortal, were men even to live as long as did the antediluvians, progress in the world would be very slow. Threescore years and ten we may hold the world back, but no longer. We hold very different opinions from our grandfathers; but had they lived till now, it is doubtful if they would have greatly modified theirs. Enlightened as we think ourselves, it is quite probable that the generation that acts a century hence may wonder how we managed to rub along in our benightedness!

Many men are morbidly fearful of being thought inconsistent, and will rather hide their opinion

than run the risk of being thought so. Though a man may cling thus to what he may have reason to believe is not quite correct, for fear of being inconsistent, nobody will blame his son, far less his grandson, for maintaining exactly the opposite to his father's opinion. Thus, as men die, errors die; as they are swept from the stage of life, their opinions are replaced by more forward ones, held by the men who fill the shoes of those that went before.

As the Angel of Death is the destroyer of prejudices, so is he the healer of national animosities. The Scotsmen and the Englishmen who fought so fiercely and hated so bitterly at Bannockburn and at Flodden are long since gone, and in their place there is a living race of Scotsmen and Englishmen who belong to one nation, and are proud of each other. Eighty years ago, Frenchmen and Englishmen hated and fought as fiends hate and fight; but death has taken the haters away, and a new race of Englishmen and a new race of Frenchmen to-day regard each other in a very different way. To-day, the Frenchman spends his surplus hate on the Prussian, and the Prussian returns it with not a little insolence, by way of interest. But Death has a drug that is potent enough to quench even *their* animosities; and when he has had time to practise his art, there will remain Germans and Frenchmen ready to acknowledge that there is room enough in Europe for both; to respect the greatness of each other, and to exchange, not rifle-shots, but friendly greetings.

For centuries, misgovernment has sown evil seed in unhappy Ireland, and the result is a race of Irishmen smarting under a sense of wrong, and crying out accordingly. Were men to live for ever, were memories to live for ever, Ireland never would be pacified. Bit by bit, justice is being done to Ireland, and man by man, death is removing those in whose breast the sense of wrong swelled till it has developed into fury. By-and-by their hatred will be extinguished; in course of time, the animosities between landlord and tenant will be buried. Death sits final arbiter in many a strife.

BY MEAD AND STREAM.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.—WHIRLWINDS.

MISS HADLEIGH was always effusive in her welcomes, and on the present occasion she was more effusive than ever in her reception of Madge.

'I have been dying with anxiety to see you, dear; and if you had not come to-day, I should have gone to Willowmere, or sent for you.'

'I am glad to have come at the proper moment, then—when you wanted me.'

'Oh, it is most, most fortunate!' (She found a difficulty in discovering a sufficient superlative, and so doubled the one at her command.) 'And it concerns you as much as us, for it is about Philip and his uncle.'

Madge had not been excited with curiosity about the cause of Miss Hadleigh's anxiety to see her; and even now she was not disturbed, although more interested, when she learned that Philip had something to do with it.

'Has anything particular happened?'

'We don't know yet, dear; that is what vexes us. Philip has not been here for—oh, ever so long; and such strange things are being said about them in the city, that a friend of mine' (a pretty simper here) 'considered it to be his duty to come out expressly to tell me and ask if I knew anything.'

'But what is being said and who has told you?' inquired Madge, still undisturbed, and even inclined to smile, having experience in the young lady's way of revelling in exaggerations on the most trivial occasions.

'Alfred—that is Mr Crowell, you know.'

The correction was made with a little self-conscious smile, as if she were saying: 'Of course you know that I have the right to call him Alfred.'

Madge bowed.

'Well, Alfred tells me that people are saying that Mr Shield's great fortune is a great bubble swindle; and something about bulls and bears, that I don't understand; and that poor Philip will never be able to meet the engagements he has made in the belief that this man possessed millions. He has been dreadfully deceived; but nobody will believe that; and Philip will have to suffer all the blame, because the thing has been so cunningly done that nobody can touch Mr Shield. He is not a partner, and is in no way responsible for what Philip said or did. . . . It is perfectly frightful, and has made me so nervous that I really don't know what I am doing ever since Alfred went away. Alfred is so generous and so brave—he has gone to search for Philip, and see if anything can be done to help him out of the mess.'

Making all allowance for probable and possible exaggerations, this news was startling, and it was rendered more so by the excited interjectional manner in which it was conveyed. But it obtained additional significance when she remembered what Philip himself had said of his worries, and what had passed between her and Mr Beecham. No doubt, Philip, desiring to spare her anxiety, had made too little of his difficulties, had avoided details, and left her to believe that they were only of such a nature as to involve temporary embarrassment, which could be overcome by coolness and resolution. Alfred Crowell, being under no constraint, had blurted out the truth—or rather, he had found the rumours of such importance as to induce him to make a special journey to Ringsford to inquire into their truth. That he should make the rumours an excuse for an extra visit to his betrothed was out of the question. He came and went at will.

If it were true, then, that Philip had fallen into or been led into such desperate trouble, what was she to think of Mr Beecham's assurances that no harm should come to him? And she had pledged herself to remain silent!

These things passed through her mind as the panorama of a whole life appears in one picture to the eyes of a man who is drowning. But with the same rapidity came the suggestion of what should be done.

'You ought to seek the advice of your father.' The voice was a little husky, but the manner was decisive.

Miss Hadleigh moved her hands—they were neat hands, and she was fond of displaying them—gently upward and stared in despondent astonishment.

'We dare not speak to papa about anything connected with Mr Shield. You can't know how badly papa has been treated by him, or you would never think of such a thing.'

'Then I must do it.'

She rose and made a pace towards the door as she spoke.

'Oh, you must not do it, dear, for your own sake!' cried Miss Hadleigh, alarmed at the idea of anybody venturing to speak to her father on a subject which he had absolutely forbidden to be mentioned. 'You will bring us all into trouble if you do. You do know that papa did not want Philip to have any dealings with this dreadful person, and Philip would take his own way. You could not expect papa to be pleased with his disobedience; and you cannot expect him to be ready to give advice now, when his former advice was neglected. If you have any notion of papa's way, you must understand that he would only be angry, and say that he spoke at the right time, and it was no use speaking now.'

'I shall not bring any trouble upon you,' said Madge quietly; 'and although I see how unpleasant the subject must be to your father, I wish to speak to him. Do not be afraid, Beatrice.'

She took Miss Hadleigh's hand in both her own and looked kindly in the flushed face. But although Miss Hadleigh was afraid of her father, she could not endure to be assured by another that she need not be so. Consequently, her shoulders went up, and her chin went up, and her brows came down a little, whilst her tone became slightly supercilious.

'Oh, it is not on my own account that I advise you not to speak to him about this most painful business. I was thinking of you; for it will be a little awkward if you make him angry and refuse to help Philip, even when he has got rid of this most extremely disagreeable relative. But of course you can please yourself. I do not think my brother will be grateful to you afterwards, when he learns how careful I was to warn you. . . . Shall I inquire where papa is?'

'If you please,' said Madge, attempting to smile; 'but you are not to be vexed with me, Beatrice.'

'Not at all, dear,' was the response, in a slightly hysterical note, as the bell was rung with emphasis; 'my anxiety is entirely to save you disappointment.'

'I must risk that.'

The servant who answered Miss Hadleigh's summons informed her that Mr Hadleigh was in the library.

'He spends nearly all his time there now,' said

Miss Hadleigh, when the servant had departed with his message; 'he goes to town seldom, and often does not go out of the house all day.'

She was interrupted by the appearance of her father; and he was so rarely seen in the drawing-room, except for a few minutes before dinner—and not always then, unless when there were guests present—that she was startled by the sudden apparition. Moreover, she had calculated that he would send a message to the effect that he was engaged, or that he would see the visitor in the library, and in either case, she would have been protected from the suspicion of having any share in bringing about the interview. She was determined that she should not be forced to take any active part in it, and not being prepared with an excuse, she said plainly: 'Madge wants to speak to you,' and went out of the room.

Mr Hadleigh's cold face never indicated the emotions of his mind or heart; but his eyes, which followed Miss Hadleigh until the door closed upon her, turned slowly to Madge, met hers, and noting her disturbed expression, seemed to ask for explanation.

'You so rarely ask to see me, Miss Heathcote, that I am afraid something unpleasant has occurred.'

'I am sorry to disturb you,' she began quietly, but the undercurrent of agitation was revealed by the hesitating awkwardness of her manner.

'You ought rather to say that you know I am willing to be disturbed whenever you wish to see me,' he rejoined, with that suggestion of a smile which appeared at times to her and to no one else.

'Thank you—thank you. But have you not heard that Philip is in difficulties?'

'What kind of difficulties—about money?'

'Yes, yes; and his uncle, it is said, will not help him, or cannot. But you can, and will, if it should be true.'

Her hand touched his arm trustfully, as if to signify that her hope of safety lay in him. He placed his hand on hers.

'I know nothing of Philip's affairs, and have forbidden any one in the house to speak about them to me. He and I have settled matters between us: he has chosen his course, and is to abide by it. You are aware that it is not the course I should have liked him to follow; and being as it is, I cannot interfere with him.'

'But if you learn that he has been deceived and is on the brink of a great misfortune—of ruin, which will bring disgrace with it—you would not refuse to guide him!'

For an instant there was a gleam in the man's eyes, as if he rose in triumph over a fallen foe.

'You must tell me what you mean,' he said, controlling whatever evil passion had stirred within him and speaking in his ordinary measured tone. 'What you say would be very alarming, if I did not think that you must be mistaken in regard to Mr Shield. As for Philip's speculation, I did not think it had much chance of success, although it seemed to me worth trying, if it afforded him pleasure, and if—as I understood—the success or failure of his project was provided for. Has he told you that the failure has come so quickly?'

'No; he has not told me that failure has come upon him, but that he feared it. The men, the work, and all the calculations of expenses seemed to have gone wrong when he last spoke to me. Within this hour, I learned that it was reported in the city that he would be unable to meet the engagements he has made.'

'You must not mind city reports about new concerns, Miss Heathcote, for they are frequently the result of nothing more than the whispers of rivals who speak of what they wish to happen. Rumours are seldom circulated about an old established business without some good grounds for them. But for Philip's business, you will have to prepare yourself for all sorts of ridiculous rumours. You must admit that his experiment is peculiar enough to provoke them.'

'Then you do not think they can be true,' she said, drawing a long breath of relief.

'That would depend upon their source, as I am trying to make you understand. You need not in any case be anxious until you have definite information from Philip himself. I do not like to speak about Mr Shield; but, eccentric as he is, I do not think he would leave him in the lurch, when he knows that so long as Philip continues to hold the position of his heir, I shall do nothing for him.'

'Not even if Philip had been deceived?'

'Not even then. . . . But I will do anything for you.'

'And that will be the same thing,' she said, her face brightening.

'Not quite,' he observed with a coldness that was almost harsh.

But she did not observe the difference of tone and manner: she only felt that here was the opportunity to make Philip's rumoured misfortunes the means of bringing about what Philip most desired—the reconciliation of his father and Austin Shield.

'You say you would do anything for me,' she said after a moment's reflection, her expression becoming very serious as she lifted her eyes to his with pensive inquiry.

'I have said it.' The coldness had left his voice, and in its stead there was a subdued fervour, which indicated how much he was in earnest.

Then she looked at him steadily for a minute—still with that pensive inquiry in her eyes.

'You were kind—most kind and generous to me, when you desired that I should stop Philip from going to Mr Shield. You were kind, too, in the calmness with which you accepted my explanation why it was that I could not comply with your request. I am grateful.'

'Do not speak in this formal way,' he interrupted—a very unusual breach of manners for him. 'Tell me what it is you want, and if it is in my power, it shall be done.'

'It is quite within your power'—she was speaking very slowly—'but as I understand, you will find the task a most disagreeable one.'

'That does not matter. Try me.'

'Your readiness to promise makes me afraid to speak.'

'That is not fair to me, when you say that the task is quite within my power.'

'It is, it is; and it has been in my mind for months to ask you to do it.'

'If it is to serve you, have no hesitation in asking.'

'It will be a great service to me, because it will add very much to my happiness and to Philip's. I know—I have been told by yourself and others—that your relations with Mr Shield were of an unpleasant nature.'

As she made an awkward pause, he bowed his head slightly, and the cold expression was beginning to appear on his face again. Her voice was not quite so steady as at first when she continued:

'Well, will you prove to me that there was something more than a mere good-natured desire to please, when you said that you were ready to do anything for me? Will you agree to forget, or forgive, whatever misunderstandings there were between you in the past, and consent to offer your hand in friendship to your wife's brother?'

Mr Hadleigh stood quite still and silent for a little. Whatever surprise or displeasure he might be feeling, there was no indication of either on his face. He was again the hard stern man he appeared to the people around him. Madge did not like this change, and became pale as she remembered the terrible charge which was laid against him. She almost trembled with fear lest she should find it true; and then there was a flush of anger with herself for pitying one who could be so heartlessly cruel.

'Do you know the man?' he asked quietly by-and-by.

'Yes; I have met him.'

'And like him?'

'I do; and believe him to be our friend, no matter what may be said about him.' Even in her present excitement she was surprised at the singular coincidence in the nature of the questions asked by Mr Beecham and Mr Hadleigh about her acquaintance with them.

'Is it at his suggestion that you have made this proposal to me?'

'He is entirely ignorant that I had any such intention.'

'And if you had told him, he would have scoffed at the idea that I was capable of saying—even for your sake—Yes; I am ready to give him my hand in all friendliness, if he is willing to accept it.' The sad smile which lightened and softened his features appeared again. 'Have I satisfied you that I am ready to do anything for you?'

She was astounded by his sudden change of manner and ready consent to become reconciled to his enemy. Then her face brightened, and there was something approaching to an hysterical note of joy in her voice as she exclaimed: 'Then you are innocent! It is not true that you had any part in the ruin of his friend George Laurence—it is not true that you had anything to do with the report of Mr Shield's marriage which destroyed my mother's happiness! Oh, I am glad—glad and grateful!'

And in the impulse of her gladness, she would have clasped his hands; but he looked startled and drew back, as a guilty man might do. Her astonishment took another turn: was it possible that he yielded so readily to her proposal because he wished to make atonement for the past?

He recovered himself instantly, and took her hand.

'I see, Miss Heathcote, that Mr Shield has told you his version of these unhappy events,' he said anxiously; 'and in justice to myself, I must tell you mine.'

ELECTRICITY FOR NOTHING!

WE recently received an invitation to witness, in London, a new method of producing electricity for lighting and other purposes 'free of cost.' The announcement that anything, with the exception, perhaps, of the air we breathe, can in these days be had for nothing, tempted us without delay to pay a visit to 31 Lombard Street, where, at the offices of Mr H. A. Fergusson, the new system was to be seen at work. Here we found a number of the now familiar incandescent globes dispersed about a large room, together with some small motors for driving sewing-machines, &c., the whole or any number of which could be put into operation by the turn of various switches. These lamps and motors all derived their electrical energy from a primary battery contained in a cupboard. Upon looking into this cupboard, we saw a number of wooden trays, lined with sheet-copper, piled one above the other like a nest of drawers; and we were told that each tray represented one cell of the battery. Further examination showed that the constituents of each cell were a plate of zinc, placed horizontally above a dark layer of oxide of copper in a solution of caustic potash. Coming to the question of cost, or rather of alleged freedom from cost, we learned that the cells were easily charged in the first instance, and that when once charged, would remain without attention for at least a month. During this time the battery would furnish a current. In the process, the copper would be gradually exhausted; but by a simple operation, could be brought back to its pristine state, and would be ready once more for another month's work. Meanwhile the zinc would gradually be dissolved to form oxide of zinc. Now, one ton of metallic zinc can be transformed in this way to a ton and a quarter of oxide—a valuable white pigment—and as the oxide sells for a greater price than the original zinc, the promoters have some ground for their statement that electricity can be produced by this battery free of cost.

Unfortunately, recent experience of electric-lighting schemes has made the public very cautious in their reception of any new thing of an electrical nature, and there is little doubt that for some time really promising schemes will suffer for the shortcomings of their predecessors. It is, too, by no means the first time that a battery has been brought forward with the intimation that it will pay its own cost by the value of its by-products. But the effect upon the price of such by-products of glutting the market with them, is generally omitted from the calculations. Hitherto, such schemes have proved illusory; though it by no means follows that they must always do so. We have the example of gas manufacture before us, where, by careful working, the cost of the gas could be more than covered by the value of the other products of the coal.

A great deal of valuable information on the subject of primary batteries for electric lighting may

be gleaned from a paper recently read before the Society of Arts, London, by Mr Isaac Probert, and which has since been published in that Society's *Journal*. (We may here point out that the word 'primary,' as applied to batteries, has become necessary in quite recent times, to distinguish those which furnish a direct current from those which, under the name of accumulators, storage or secondary batteries, require charging, in the first instance, from another battery, or dynamo-machine. The current so stored can be afterwards utilised, as convenience may dictate.) This paper records in a lucid manner the numberless attempts which have been made to utilise primary batteries; but, except for experimental purposes, the cost has always proved prohibitive. The unhealthy fumes given by such batteries as those of Grove and Bunsen—which were, until lately, practically the only forms that could be used for electric lighting—also limited their use to situations where the fumes could do no harm. In process of time, Faraday's grand discovery, that electricity could be generated by a magnet, and the ultimate outcome of that discovery—the introduction of the Gramme machine and its hosts of fellows—gave for a time the *coup de grace* to battery projects, and for a long time they were heard of no more. But why was this? Let the question be answered by the practical illustration given by Mr Probert, which we must quote—for want of space—in a very condensed form.

Let it be supposed that a house is furnished with one hundred incandescent lamps, the electric energy for which is provided by a dynamo-machine and its necessary companion, a steam-engine. The mechanical energy required for the work is, say, twelve and a half horse-power. This is of course derived from the combustion of so much coal; and if there were such a thing as a perfect engine where no heat was wasted, the amount of fuel required would be very small indeed. But, as a matter of fact, with an ordinary engine the weight of coal required to furnish the power given would be about fifty-six pounds per hour—costing, say, sixpence. Giving the lights a working period of five hours a day all the year round, we have a cost for fuel alone of forty-five pounds. Then we have to take into account the first cost of the machinery, the interest on that cost, annual depreciation, and attendance. We need not dwell on the separate estimate for each item, but may state the total yearly cost of the installation at one hundred and forty-seven pounds, or nearly thirty shillings per lamp.

Now, let us assume that instead of a dynamo-machine and its motor, a galvanic battery is employed, and that the amount of energy furnished is the same as before. In this case, we shall owe our energy to the combustion of zinc in lieu of coal; and instead of obtaining the oxygen for the process from the air, which costs nothing, we must of necessity get it from an acid, which costs a great deal. The total amount of zinc dissolved per hour in the acid, to furnish the current required for our one hundred lamps, will be about thirteen pounds-weight, the cost being nearly three shillings. Added to this sum must be the amount expended on acids, the cost of attendance, prime cost of apparatus, interest, depreciation, &c., bringing up the total annual charge to

seven hundred and fifty-nine pounds ten shillings, or seven pounds eleven shillings and eightpence per lamp.

These figures will be both interesting and instructive to many persons who wish to have some idea of the probable cost of changing their old lamps for new ones; but they serve our present purpose in pointing out the reason why the battery current has been superseded for lighting purposes by the far more economical dynamo-machine. Still, it is not every one who requires so many as a hundred lamps; and for smaller installations, an efficient, easily managed, and cheaply working battery would have a wide application. But it must be remembered that electricity can now be had at comparatively little cost to light a dozen lamps or so by employing a small dynamo-machine driven by a gas-engine. Inventors of batteries must, therefore, remember that they have rivals in the field, and that if they would successfully compete with them, they must offer something as cheap and efficient. Hitherto, this something has not appeared. But human nature is sanguine, and the most sanguine of mortals perhaps is one in whom the inventive faculty is highly developed. In spite of previous failures, no fewer than one hundred and fifty patents for primary batteries have been taken out during the past three years. Some of these are acknowledged improvements upon past models. Many batteries now before the public cannot be critically examined, for they employ fluids the nature of which are kept secret. (Of course this objection cannot apply to a patented invention, for one of the conditions of granting protection is that the invention must be so described in the specification that any intelligent workman can understand its nature and construction.) Others cannot be well described without diagrams and technical details of no interest to the majority of our readers.

To return to the primary cell of Mr Fergusson—which, by the way, is called the Domestic Primary Battery—and putting aside all its claims to produce electricity for nothing, we may broadly state that it possesses many advantages. It is compact enough to be put away in any odd corner; it is constant in its action; it seldom requires recharging, and such recharging is a simple operation; and lastly, it has the very rare merit of giving off no fumes whatever.

TERRIBLY FULFILLED.

IN FOUR CHAPTERS.—CHAPTER III.

THURSDAY evening came, and with it Captain Ferrard; and the two shook hands with a certain guarded cordiality, as of prize-fighters about to 'get to business.' But the dinner was a good one; Ferrard thawed considerably under the influence of a bottle of old Johannisberg, and enjoyed himself more than he had anticipated. His host treated him with much deference, and seemed considerably impressed by his conversation. The captain was consequently in great good-humour with himself and all the world, and exerted himself—as, to do him justice, he well knew how—to be agreeable and amusing and to make a favourable impression. He was surprised also to find that this auctioneering father-in-law

of his was really a very entertaining fellow. He overflowed with anecdote of a certain highly flavoured kind, and was full of curious experiences; he talked a good deal of 'shop,' about pictures and precious stones and such matters in the way of his trade, but it was amusing 'shop,' and served to introduce many strange and out-of-the-way facts and incidents.

The truth was that Mr Cross was taking a good deal more wine than usual, whereby he was ably seconded in his loyal resolve to think as well of his son-in-law and to be as friendly and open with him as possible. The pleasingly insinuating ways of the gallant captain were not without their effect, and the auctioneer began to feel more favourably disposed towards him than he had at one time thought possible. He appeared, now that one knew him, to be an open-hearted, good-humoured sort of fellow, one who was nobody's enemy but his own, who was more sinned against than sinning, and so on. In his then condition, it seemed to Mr Cross that he had perhaps been rather too hasty and prone to think evil. His daughter, as he well knew, had her 'little tempers,' and might herself to some extent have contributed to her wedded unhappiness. No doubt the young man would be amenable to reason, and with judicious management and some outlay, might make a tolerable son-in-law after all.

The talk at last centred itself upon diamonds, and Ferrard was in the midst of an animated description of those belonging to certain family connections of his own, when the auctioneer interrupted him.

'I know all about the Frayer diamonds,' he said—'no one better. But I wouldn't mind laying you a wager that I could show you some, and not far off either, that would beat them hollow.'

'I think you would lose your money,' said Ferrard.

The auctioneer regarded him with vinous solemnity. 'Look here, my boy,' he suddenly said; 'I've taken a fancy to you, and I'm sorry we should have been at odds so long. Perhaps I may have something else to say to you to-morrow, and perhaps you may be glad to hear it—I can't tell. Anyhow, to prove to you that I'm in earnest, I'll show you to-night what I wouldn't show to any other man alive. Just you come with me.'

'Are you going to let me have a sight of the wonderful diamonds?' laughed Ferrard, as he followed his host into the hall.

'That's just what I am going to do, and a little more besides. But first of all, you give me your word as an officer and a gentleman that you'll tell nobody about anything you may see to-night. Promise!'

'By all means—of course,' assented Ferrard carelessly. He was becoming a little bored, and had no expectation of seeing anything out of the common.

'That's all right. Put on your hat,' said Mr Cross, taking his lantern from a cupboard and opening the hall-door.

They were absent about half an hour. When they returned, Ferrard was in a state of dazzled amazement. He did not in truth know which

most to wonder at—the number and beauty of the gems, the ingenuity of their safe keeping, or the fatuous folly of the man who, even under the influence of wine, could impart such a secret to a person of whom he knew next to nothing, except that—as the captain frankly confessed to himself—he did not bear the best of characters. And he fairly hugged himself at the thought, that if he played his cards well, the wealth which was capable of affording such surprises as this might one day be his own.

'I am glad we did not bet, Mr Cross,' he said, 'for I cannot afford to lose. They are far the most splendid diamonds I have ever seen. I must really thank you for giving me such a sight, and especially for the confidence you have placed in me, which I hope is an earnest of our future friendship.'

'Wait till to-morrow—that's all I say—wait till to-morrow,' said the auctioneer thickly. 'I'm hardly fit to talk business just now. But I will say,' he continued, laying a heavy hand on Ferrard's shoulder, 'though I always knew, of course, that you were quite the gentleman, I never thought I should have taken to any man, least of all to you, as I have done. We had best be going to bed—it's late; and I must have an hour in the City to-morrow, before I meet Amy at London Bridge.—Good-night, and pleasant dreams, my boy.'

Some men, the worship of Bacchus visits with heavy and dreamless slumber; others it renders wakeful and uneasy. This latter was the case with Mr Cross. He tossed and turned, courting sleep in vain; and thirst and dyspepsia supervened on excitement. His thickly crowding thoughts took a gloomy and despondent tone. Now that he was sober and sorry, he anathematized his folly in betraying the secret of his safe, so closely guarded through long years, even from his nearest friends, only to be blurted out in a moment of ill-judged confidence to a mere stranger, of whom he knew nothing but ill. All his old dislike and distrust of Ferrard returned, intensified by the consciousness that that gentleman had gained a distinct advantage over him. He determined that, although he would not altogether go back from his implied promise, he would hedge its fulfilment about with such conditions as should insure an entire change in Ferrard's habits and mode of life, and should oblige him to cast in his lot with the class to which his wife belonged. In this way alone, he considered, could he ascertain whether it would be possible to trust the man and to secure peace, if not happiness, for Amy; and at the same time to patch up to some extent her husband's shattered plans. At last he rose from an almost sleepless bed, feeling ill and worried, and more disposed than ever to repeat his wish for Captain Ferrard's speedy dissolution.

When guest and host met at the breakfast-table, the manner of the latter, to Ferrard's surprise, had totally changed. He was nervous and irritable; he complained that he was growing old, and said that a bottle or two of wine over-night would not once have affected him in this way. He ate little, but drank a good deal of coffee, and kept fussing nervously with several keys which lay beside his plate, putting them

into his pockets, taking them out again, dropping them on the floor, and grumbling at his own awkwardness; altogether, behaving like a man considerably off his balance.

'I've been up and about, for all I took too much last night,' he said; 'and sent my traps off to the cloak-room at London Bridge before you were out of your bed, young man. I've found time to take a look at the sparklers too,' he added, holding up two of the keys, fastened together by a ring. 'Always do, every day of my life, before I leave in the morning, and the last thing at night. Wouldn't leave it undone for anything you could mention. These diamonds—I meant them for Amy, poor girl; and if— But never mind about that just now.'

'As I understood you last night,' said Ferrard, who was growing impatient, 'you had something of importance to say to me this morning touching our mutual relations.'

'Well, I don't know—I don't know,' replied the auctioneer. 'You mustn't take everything for gospel a man says when he's had a glass.'

The captain's face grew long.

'Oh, you needn't look so glum. I'm not going back upon what I intended, though perhaps it may not be all you were expecting. I have felt uncommon sore about this business, Ferrard, I can tell you; and if you and I are to patch up a bad job, you'll have to make a fresh start altogether, and that's flat.'

Ferrard remained silent.

'I'm pretty plain-spoken, and I tell you straight that I can't bear an idle man, and won't have anything to do with one, if I can help it. All the same, I want to be friends with you, and let bygones be bygones; and so this is what I offer. Cut the West End, and racing and billiards and gallivanting, and come into the City. I'll employ you in the business. If you give your mind to it and work hard, you'll soon find your feet; and then I'll take you into partnership. When I go, you will have it all to yourself; and a very pretty penny it will be in your pocket. Your father will stop your allowance, of course; but you and Amy can live here with me, free; that'll save you a good bit; and giving up your expensive habits will save you a lot more. Till you are in the business, I'll allow you—ah, I'll allow you three hundred a year; and altogether, you'll be better off in this way than you've been for some time.—Don't say anything now' (not that the captain had any such intention, being stricken literally dumb); 'think it over, and make up your mind by the time I come back.'

He gathered his keys together with a good deal of unnecessary clatter, and locked them into a leathern wallet, muttering something about leaving them at his bank. Then he looked at his watch. 'Hillo! I have not got another minute. You must excuse me, captain—don't hurry over your breakfast, but I must leave you at once—there's a deal to be seen to before we start. Good-bye; don't move; and think it over—think it over.'

He had shaken hands, talked himself into the hall, and slammed the front-door, before the captain had been able in the slightest degree to grasp the situation, so utterly confused and astounded was he at this sudden wreck of his

hopes. Anger had no place whatever in his mind. At another time, he might have been both amused and indignant at the offer which had been made him and at the manner of its making. The picture of himself as an auctioneer's clerk, with the prospect of becoming in time, if he were good, a real auctioneer, might have struck him as exquisitely ludicrous; yet, though a gambler, a spendthrift, a debauchee, he was no fool; and it was just possible that, considering the splendid reward in prospective, he might at anyrate have seemed to assent, in the hope of making better terms after a while. But now, there was no room for any such speculations, for absolute ruin stared him in the face. The auctioneer had supposed him to be hard pressed for money; but what was the real nature of the pressure, he was far from imagining. In a short while, a certain acceptance for a heavy amount would fall due, renewal of which had been definitely and decidedly refused on the very day of Amy's visit to her father. Unless that acceptance were taken up on presentation, it would forthwith be known that the signature of one of the indorsers had never been written by that gentleman; and in that case, the career of the Honourable James Ferrard would be most unpleasantly terminated. This was more than suspected by the holders of the bill; it was their reason for refusing renewal; and it was their intention to use it as a lever for extorting from the captain or his family, not only payment of the debt, but a goodly sum, by way of hush-money, into the bargain. Money he must have somehow, and that immediately, even if he had to appeal to his father; a last resource which, though audacious enough in general, he could not contemplate without dismay. Besides, the earl's affairs were themselves so desperate, and the amount was so large, that he had little expectation that assistance would be possible, even if the will to afford it were good. A faint hope of escape had been held out to him by the auctioneer's visit; and last night, from the friendliness of his host's manner and the extraordinary mark of his confidence, he had fully expected that, with a little management, the money would be forthcoming. But this chance was now utterly gone; and flight, suicide, or penal servitude seemed to be the only alternatives left to him.

At this stage of his meditations, he became aware of three keys in a ring which were lying under the edge of his host's plate. He continued to gaze abstractedly at them for some moments, half-unconsciously noting certain peculiarities in the shape of the larger of them. All at once he came to himself with a start. They were the keys of the strong-room and the iron box; overlooked, of course, by the auctioneer when he put the others into the locked-up wallet. To do him justice, Ferrard's first thought was to snatch them up, take a cab into the City, and restore them to their owner. Mechanically he stretched out his hand, then drew it quickly away, and fell back in his chair, horrified at the thought which had at that moment seized upon him. He had written the name of another man; it was done in a minute, and was comparatively easy. But it is not easy, for the first time at least, to take the goods of another man—to steal.

There they lay, close to his hand as it were

utterly in his power. All that sweet and desirable money, frozen into a few crystals, the property of this plebeian, who had so poor an idea of enjoying it, so hateful an objection to parting with it. He tingled with envious rage at the thought. Why, a poor dozen of them, like angels of light, would put to the rout his persecuting demons of difficulty and danger; yet to help himself to them would be—*theft*. He looked at his watch. Half-past ten. The train was to leave at ten minutes to eleven. No doubt Cross would discover his oversight, and return with all speed to remedy it. He sat on and on, and gazed at the fatal keys until they seemed to fill his eye and brain. Once a foot-step approached the door of the room. Without knowing why, he hastily moved the plate so as completely to hide them. A servant looked in, and seeing him still there, begged pardon and withdrew, wondering when he would have finished breakfast. Then he softly moved the plate back, and again sat looking at the keys. One thought ebbed and flowed continually in his mind, flowing more and more fiercely, ebbing with surely decreasing force. To take the diamonds—*theft*. Not to take them—*ruin*.

Half-past eleven. No cab at the door, no hurried step in the hall. Cross must now be well on his way to Brighton, and under the idea that the keys were safe at his bank. At any rate, the things must not be left lying there. Clearly, it was his duty to take charge of them until they could be restored to their owner.

Ferrard presently rose from his chair, and put the keys in his waistcoat pocket. Then he left the house, stealthily, like one in fear.

That night, or rather the next morning, for it was between one and two o'clock, a figure came round the corner of the street from the square and walked a few paces past the iron door. Then the figure stood still for a moment and peered up and down the road. Not a sound, save the distant rattle of a night-cab—not a movement anywhere around. The figure turned and walked back. It stood in the shadow of the wall, glanced round once more, seemed to listen, opened the door, entered, and closed it gently from within.

The few hours of night wore out, the bright summer morning was come. The blinking policeman drifted slowly up the street, and as usual inspected the door. All well. He thought he heard a distant cry, and raised his head to listen. The cry was repeated. Satisfied that it was very far off—nowhere near *his* beat—he smote his chilled hands together and sauntered away, to meet his welcome relief.

CHAPTER IV.—CONCLUSION.

Amy did not greatly enjoy herself at Brighton. Her father was kind to her, but he was not the jovial, light-hearted companion whom she remembered of old. He was dull, heavy, and irritable, and was constantly engrossed in thought, muttering anxiously to himself. He did not sleep well, for she heard him walking about his room in the night; and he grew more haggard and weary-looking every day. He was clearly not benefiting by the sea-air. He spoke but little; and on the question of her relations with her husband, he, much to her surprise and disgust, declined to

speak at all. When she once began to babble of her wrongs, he turned upon her with positive anger; told her that he had come there for rest, not to be worried; that it would no doubt all be arranged comfortably on their return; and that, till then, she was to preserve silence on the subject. All this made Mrs Ferrard extremely dignified and sulky; but being a young person of no great depth, she simply concluded that Pa had a fit of indigestion, and contrived to amuse herself fairly well with shopping, drives, and promenades, in the company of certain friends of her maiden days who chanced to be at Brighton, and who were by no means averse to the society of a lady of title. At all events, the life was a pleasant contrast to that which the Honourable Mrs Ferrard had enjoyed of late in the company of her lord and master.

The truth was that Mr Cross was very ill both in body and mind. He had, though he knew it not, been ailing ever since his daughter's flight; and the perplexity and distress he was now enduring were telling upon him fearfully. He had quite lost faith in the success of his plans; calmer reflection told him that it would be vain to hope that the leopard could change his spots in the manner he had proposed. Ferrard's blank silence at the breakfast-table, and the fact that no letter had been received from him since, bore out this opinion.

But what caused him greater trouble and alarm than anything else was the manner in which the idea of Ferrard's death had taken hold upon his mind, to the exclusion of all other thoughts, until it had assumed the pitiless tyranny of a fixed idea. Night and day it was all before him—the uselessness of the man's existence, the evils which would cease with it, the chances for and against its duration, the various causes which might perhaps terminate it. And through all, a fierce and devouring longing for its termination, such as he dared not now acknowledge to himself. He was maddened at the difficulties in his way, horrified at the tendency of his thoughts; and there were times when he felt that the safest and easiest thing to do would be to row himself out a mile or two from the beach and hide his troubles and temptations for ever under the careless waves.

They had only been at Brighton five days, when Mr Cross, to his daughter's surprise and chagrin, announced his intention of returning to town at once. Amy expostulated, but in vain; he declared that he was sick of the place; that it was doing him no good—which was quite true; that he must get back to work and occupy his mind. Finding opposition useless, Mrs Ferrard made her preparations with the best grace she might, and they took the noon-train to London the same day.

On arrival, they drove first to the lodgings in Duke Street, and the auctioneer entered the house with his daughter. To their surprise, they found that Ferrard was not only absent, but had not been seen or heard of since the day of his wife's departure, when he had remained indoors until ten o'clock at night, and had then gone out; leaving, according to his wont, no word as to when he should return. The people of the house had after a time concluded that he also must be at Brighton. Amy, being used to these

absences, though never before of such duration, was less surprised than her father, who was not only astonished, but greatly cast down at what seemed to be an additional evidence of Ferrard's rejection of his plans, and determination to continue the old courses.

'There, it's no use talking,' he said at last. 'He'll come home some time, I suppose; and when he does, send him on to me at once, d'ye hear, Amy? Tell him—ay, tell him that I've altered my mind—that I have proposals to make to him which will suit him much better than the last. I must try and hit on something else. And if he's not back to-morrow, come over and let me know in the evening, will you? There, good-bye; and keep up your spirits, my pet—father'll see you all right, don't you fear.'

He kissed her and departed. He must get home, and quietly think matters over. Suppose the fellow had bolted for good and all? What was to be done in that event? It required careful consideration, and should have it at once.

He called at the bank on the way home, to get his keys. The parcel, tied with string and sealed with his own seal, was delivered to him just as he had left it. He drove to his house, where he found several letters awaiting him. Like a good man of business, he set to work to dispose of all lighter matters, before addressing himself to the consideration of the weightier. He opened and glanced at the letters; he took up the parcel, once more examined the seal, tore off the paper, unlocked the wallet, and spread the keys on the table. All right. Was it? Surely there was something wrong?

What could it be?

He puzzled over the keys again and again, but without result. He seemed to be constantly on the verge of detecting the deficiency, whatever it was; but the clearness and readiness of his thinking powers had of late in great measure departed, and it continued to escape him. At last he thought that he must be the victim of a nervous delusion, and with an effort, turned his thoughts to other matters. He would first, according to custom, visit his diamonds; then he would answer such of the letters as required a reply; then he would be at leisure to reflect upon the next step to be taken with regard to his son-in-law. And once more the dominant wish rose in his mind, filling it like a poisonous mist.

He took his lantern and the keys, and went to the strong-room, which he entered, closing the doors as usual carefully behind him. What was it, as he turned towards the safe, that sent him staggering back to the wall, his eyes starting from his head, his hair crisping with horror? The drawer full of papers lay on the table. The iron semicircular handle projected from the orifice. It was in an upright position—it had not been turned to the horizontal one. And the safe was closed.

He saw the whole sequence of events in one agonising second of time, as drowning men are said to review instantaneously the whole course of their past lives. It was the absence of the duplicate keys which had puzzled him in the study; and their absence at once explained the absence of Ferrard. He now remembered how, while at breakfast, just before leaving the house,

he had placed all his keys, as he had then supposed, into his wallet; how he had then and there put the locked wallet into his pocket, and had driven straight to the bank, where, without opening it, he had made it into a parcel, sealed it with his signet, and handed it to the manager, taking his receipt. The parcel had been given back to him exactly as he had left it—of that he had assured himself. Only one thing could have happened. The duplicates had never been in the wallet at all. Unused to their presence, he had doubtless left them behind; and the wretched man whom he had so insanely trusted had stolen them, had the same night entered the strong-room and the safe, and—

What would he have to face, when that massy door should glide away? The dingy face of the picture, guardian of the deadly trap and its awful secret, seemed to sneer and gibe at him, daring him to seek an answer to the question.

Stay! There was one hope. He might have carried away the keys in his hand or his pockets, and dropped them in the street, or left them on the bank counter. If this were so, some common marauder might have met with his deserts—or, if he had recently entered, might even now be waiting to make a dash for liberty!

He approached the door, and listened. All was silent. He called in a quivering voice, which rang weirdly in the vaulted roof, 'Who is there?' No reply—no movement.

He sat down in the one chair, and tried to remember whether on that fatal night he had withheld from his guest the ultimate secret, of the necessity for half-turning the handle before withdrawing it. In vain. All was confused and dream-like. Either he had disclosed the secret, or he had not. If he had not—

He dragged the table desperately to the corner of the room and mounted upon it. Pushing at one end a stone seemingly as firmly fixed as its fellows, it revolved on a pivot. Thrusting his hand through the gap, he withdrew the second handle, and the safe-door glided back. One look was enough. The next moment, he was groping blindly for the door—for escape from the horror which was behind him.

His wish was terribly fulfilled! His daughter was a widow!

He crept into the sunlit street, with difficulty closing the heavy door. White and ghastly, he leaned one hand on the wall as he went, and gasped for breath. Two or three passers-by stopped and looked after him, expecting to see him fall. He did not do so, but gained the house, let himself in, staggered into the dining-room, dropped into a chair, and, for a space, knew no more.

When he regained his senses, he contrived to get to the cellaret and to swallow a heavy dose of brandy. This restored him sufficiently to enable him to think over his discovery and to settle his plan of action. He rang the bell.

'Something dreadful has happened,' he said to the parlour-maid, who had uttered an exclamation on seeing him. 'No, no; I'm not ill—only a bit upset. Get me a pen and ink and paper, and send John for a cab. I want him to take a letter.'

He wrote a line or two with difficulty, and addressed it to the Earl of Englethorpe. Having despatched his messenger, he remained in a kind of stupor until wheels were heard at the door and the earl was announced. Their greeting was of the briefest kind, though they remained together for a considerable time. Then they repaired to the strong-room. The auctioneer on his return was more composed than he had hitherto been, but his visitor was terribly agitated. Again they were closeted together. Various depositions from the kitchen, which by this time was in a ferment of the most unendurable curiosity, failed, in spite of enterprising approaches to the keyhole, to hear more than a low murmuring within. At length the earl departed; and then the dreadful event which had happened became known to the amazed and awe-stricken household. Mr Cross had, it was said, met Captain Ferrard just outside the door, and had been accompanied by him to the strong-room, where he had fallen down—in a fit, as the auctioneer had at first supposed; stone-dead, as he had perceived immediately afterwards. Without delay, Mr Cross had gone for a doctor, who had stated that death had been instantaneous—cause, apoplexy; and would in due course formally certify to that effect.

The body was put into a coffin within two hours, and removed to the Englethorpe town-house. The father of the deceased was the only mourner at the very plain and quiet funeral which took place soon after. There was no inquest, for the necessary medical certificate was actually obtained; how obtained, it is no concern of ours to relate. Money is powerful; in every profession and calling, there are those with whom it is all-powerful.

There was a little talk at first over James Ferrard's death. People were found to say that there was something queer about the matter, and to comment on the fact that nothing had been seen of the dead man for some days before his death. But it was speedily known that he was a defaulter on the turf, which fully accounted for his disappearance from his usual haunts. Nothing, therefore, came of these suspicions, though others of a different kind were rife enough, if rather vague. The earl sternly forbade all reference to the subject, even in his own household; it was understood that something awkward was behind, which for family reasons was to be hushed up. Hushed up it accordingly was; and in a fortnight's time James Ferrard, except to his creditors, was as though he had never been.

All this was, of course, distinctly wrong, and contrary to public policy. Yet a coroner's jury could only have dragged to light matters the disclosure of which would have inflicted cruel shame and disgrace upon a noble and hitherto stainless house. The blame of the death could have attached to no one save the dead man himself; least of all to Mr Cross. His evidence would have been that he had shown the diamonds and explained the mechanism, but that he could not remember, owing to his state at the time, whether he had called attention to the secret connected with the handle. It would have been clear, either that he had not done so, or that Ferrard had forgotten it. Beyond this, there

would have been absolutely nothing to connect him with the matter. He was in a different part of the kingdom during the whole period of the occurrence, as would have been conclusively proved. 'Accidental death' would have been the only possible verdict; and it would have been as clear as daylight that the felonious intention of the deceased had brought with it its own terrible punishment.

The auctioneer followed his son-in-law to the grave in little more than a year, a broken-hearted man. It was said that he never got over the shock received on the morning of his return from Brighton. This was undoubtedly the truth; yet, as we know, it was not all the truth. Though without his knowledge or design, yet in accordance with his morbid wish, and indirectly by his act, had Ferrard died a miserable death; and the auctioneer regarded himself as a murderer, though unpunishable by the laws of this world. An already enfeebled body was unable to resist the effect of the mental torture of ceaseless self-reproach, and the end was not long in coming.

But he lived to see Amy married to such a husband as he would have chosen for her in the old happy days, and to bestow upon her by will the bulk of his fortune. This did not, however, include the diamonds or the proceeds of their sale, which he distributed before his death among the London hospitals. Amy and her husband lived in the house in the square; but the safe was sold, its ingenious mechanical arrangements destroyed, and the fatal vault and its ghastly associations bricked up together.

With much diminished hopes, owing to the death of the acceptor, the holders of the forged bill made their first cautious advances, in the hope that consideration for the honour of the family might still induce the relations of the deceased to pay a good price for silence. To their surprise, their exorbitant demands were paid in full without cavil or hesitation, and the acceptance redeemed. Where the money came from was a mystery; but it was observed that the earl always thenceforth spoke of the auctioneer as a most respectable and worthy man, to whom he was under the greatest obligations.

LIFEBOAT COMPETITION.

THE success of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution in the recent lifeboat competition will give general satisfaction. It is in the first place very gratifying that it should have won the substantial prize of six hundred pounds which was offered by the Committee of the International Fisheries Exhibition for 'the best full-sized lifeboat, fully equipped, and on a carriage, adapted to aid stranded or wrecked vessels from the shore in gales of wind, and through heavy broken seas and surf;' since it is now certain that the sum in question has been devoted to the best of all possible objects. It is also reassuring to know that the model boat of an English Institution which has not only earned a world-wide reputation for saving life at sea, but in a great measure makes up for our national shortcomings in this respect, should have held its own against all comers.

The competition was carried out under difficult

circumstances, and frequent postponements were necessary before the judges could declare the state of wind and weather to be satisfactory. The successful boat had to contend with two formidable competitors—the Hodgson Patent Lifeboat, and one built by Messrs Forrest and Son, of Limehouse; and the public interest in the experiment was considerably heightened by the fact that all three boats were exhibited in the International Fisheries Exhibition and had been examined by many thousands of persons. The Hodgson Patent Lifeboat in particular excited general curiosity from its novel construction; and the fact that it was claimed for it that it was uncapsizeable, unimmergible, and reversible, gave additional interest to its behaviour in the water. It should be added that the boat in question was built as a ship's boat, and that it therefore had to contend under a disadvantage against the heavier and more serviceable pattern of the Institution. It was, however, almost a foregone conclusion that both of these boats would fail to wrest the palm of superiority from the model built on those familiar lines which have earned such a wonderful reputation off all our coasts and under the identical conditions of the competition.

Few boats can stand the terrible test of being launched from an exposed beach through mountains of surf, and fewer still prove manageable under either oars or sails in broken water. Further, the boats of the National Lifeboat Institution possess seven qualities which experience has proved to be essential, and in each of these they have some claim to be regarded as being as nearly perfect as possible. Thus they are buoyant, self-discharging, self-righting, stable and with great power of ballasting; and they possess speed, stowage-room, and strength of build. It is perhaps in this last respect that they especially excel. One of the greatest dangers to which lifeboats are exposed is that of being stove-in against wreck or rocks; and the present pattern of boat is designed so as to possess the greatest possible strength and elasticity compatible with portability.

It is, of course, only too true that lifeboat service is, and always must be, terribly hazardous. Nearly every winter some of the heroes who man our lifeboats lay down their lives in attempting to save those of others; but this is happily but seldom the fault of the boat. It may fairly be contended that human ingenuity has exhausted its resources in this direction, and that, with certain modifications to suit local requirements, the pattern of the Lifeboat Institution is the best possible; and that even when it has to yield the palm in some one or two particulars, the rare combination of qualities which it possesses still entitles it to be considered *facile princeps*.

Now that the loss of life at sea is attracting general attention, the work of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution seems to again call for marked recognition. At a time when the national conscience is being awakened to the inefficiency of the shipping laws to secure a reasonable measure of safety for seamen, it is refreshing to turn to the sixtieth annual Report of this inestimable society. Practical benevolence is always attractive; and the facts and figures which the Institution adduces in order

to justify its claim to public support, certainly point to a vigorous usefulness. Last year, lifeboats were launched two hundred and eighty-three times, saving seven hundred and twenty-five lives, and thirty vessels. It may be added that the number of vessels would doubtless have been greatly increased but for the imperative orders that the saving of life shall be the first consideration; and it is only on those comparatively rare occasions when it can be done without endangering the safety of the crew, that lifeboats render salvage services. Two hundred and thirty lives were also saved last year by shore-boats and other means, rewards being bestowed by this Institution; and this brings up the total of lives rescued to nine hundred and fifty-five. Further, in the sixty years ending 31st December 1883, the Institution has been instrumental in saving thirty thousand five hundred and sixty-three lives, and has recompensed these noble services by the payment of seventy-seven thousand nine hundred and eighty-four pounds as rewards, and the distribution of gold and silver medals. These figures are a sufficient testimonial to secure a substantial increase of support from a nation which is nothing if not maritime. Yet it is impossible to regard the present state of things as wholly satisfactory. It is a great thing that some hundreds of lives should be saved off our coasts every year; but it should not be forgotten that some thousands are annually lost. Thus, in the year 1880-81, two thousand nine hundred and twenty-three lives were lost in British or colonial vessels off British coasts; and in the year 1881-82, this number was increased to three thousand nine hundred and seventy-eight. Later figures are not yet available; but there is little hope that they will show a decrease. Again, a recent Board of Trade return shows that the total number of lives lost in British merchant-ships in the twelve years from 1871 to 1882 inclusive amounted to thirty-eight thousand seven hundred and twenty-two. These figures are simply appalling. Doubtless a large proportion of these poor fellows perished far away from help; but it is within common knowledge that much can be done, by strengthening the resources of the Lifeboat Institution, to diminish this terrible mortality.

Let any one take the wreck-charts for a few years past, and note those districts where clusters of black spots appropriately mark the scene of fatal wrecks. Let him then turn to the Reports of the Lifeboat Institution, and see what lifeboats were stationed there, and he will find that the number of fatalities are in an inverse ratio to the number of lifeboats. Thus, many stretches of coast which bore a terrible reputation only a few years back have, chiefly owing to the increased number and efficiency of the lifeboats stationed upon them, lately become much less fearful. But the total number of lifeboats now under the management of the Institution is only two hundred and seventy-four; and although we have the best reasons for believing that no effort is spared in this direction, it is notorious that a certain number of them are very old, if not unseaworthy, craft, which should be at once replaced by new ones. Indeed, no inconsiderable proportion of the funds of the Institution

is necessarily devoted to these purposes. Thus, last year, old lifeboats were replaced by new ones at Caister, Cardigan, Margate, Padstow, Swansea, Winchelsea, and Withernsea; while wholly new stations were established at Llanael-haiarn, Mablethorp, Port Erin, and Aranmore Island. Others are in course of formation. But, turning to the wreck-chart, it is easy to see at a glance how much remains to be done.

Legislation of a drastic character, with a view to diminishing sea-risks, is in contemplation; the necessity of new harbours of refuge is attracting more attention, and the very recent official Report in favour of building a harbour at Peterhead commends itself to everybody. But both these are matters which involve delay. In the meantime, with our enormously increased tonnage, and with the heightened competition which practically compels steamships to travel in any state of weather under the significant orders, 'Full speed ahead,' with the result that collisions are year by year becoming more frequent and more fatal, it is idle to hope for a decrease in the loss of life at sea. Our lifeboats have done good work, and will do good work in the storms to come; but it is a question which will sooner or later have to be answered, whether the time has not come when, at every point on the English, Scotch, Welsh, and Irish coasts, fully equipped and serviceable lifeboats should be ready for use. This is not only perfectly feasible, but it is a national duty. The time has gone by when we can afford to be satisfied with an open verdict upon our drowned sailors and fishermen; and, apart from other considerations, such as the overloading of vessels, until we have done all that can be done to render rescue possible, we cannot be content with the selfish excuse that 'no one's to blame.'

IN QUEER COMPANY.

IN TWO PARTS.—PART II.

IN the company to which I had been introduced, it was exceedingly difficult to ask any questions respecting the details, or working, of what I may call the profession to which all present belonged. But as the evening wore on, those present became much more communicative than they had been at first. Welsh-rabbits, devilled kidneys, and other supper-dishes were called for; and were followed by potatoes, which, if not intoxicating, had the effect of loosening men's tongues, and of making them talk of what they regarded as past triumphs, and of future success, which they hoped and believed would come to pass. Some of the stories related I remembered, and made rough notes of when I went home that night; but many more I forgot; for with the most earnest intention in the world, it is almost impossible to recollect tales that are told one after another, and with not a few interruptions between them.

There was one member of this respectable society to whom I happened to sit next, and who told me in an undertone that he had once held a commission in the Indian army. Without appearing to do so, I put in the course of the evening some half-dozen leading questions to

him, and found that not only was he telling me the truth, but that I remembered perfectly well the circumstances, some fifteen years previously, which caused him to be tried by a general court-martial and cashiered. He was evidently a leading spirit amongst those present. What his real name is—or rather was, for I learned by accident, a short time ago, that he was dead—I don't care to mention. Under the peculiar circumstances which brought me amongst those I spent the evening with, there may well be applied the old adage of 'honour amongst thieves.' And although only the younger son of a younger son, this man belonged to a family of which the head is a respectable baronet, not unknown in either the political or the fashionable world. But never once, throughout the whole evening, was this individual addressed by his right name, of which I am certain the rest of the company were ignorant. In fact, he never told me in so many words who he really was; it was only when he mentioned the circumstances connected with his court-martial and said to what corps he had belonged, that I remembered all about him. He appeared to be not only very popular, but quite a leading man, and an authority amongst those present. But it certainly seemed wonderful to see him, a well-born, well-brought-up man, who had been educated at Harrow, had afterwards held a commission for some years in the Indian army, and had risen to the rank of captain, so fallen as to have become not only a professional thief, but even to glory in his shame.

Throughout the evening, he told stories of his adventures in rascal-land, which were always listened to, and invariably applauded. In one of these tales he related how he had, some years previously, taken lodgings in a well-known street near St James's Square, calling himself Lord So-and-so. A 'pal' of his, who was 'in the swim' with him, had gone to a certain wealthy gentleman in South Kensington and had asked for the place of butler, giving a reference to the so-called 'lord,' who told the tale with great glee. The gentleman who had advertised for a butler was known to have in his house a considerable quantity of plate, and his wife to have a great deal of valuable jewellery. They were wealthy people, having lately returned from one of the colonies, where the gentleman had acquired a large fortune. The latter called upon the would-be nobleman to ask about the character of the butler.

'I received him,' said he who told the tale, 'with a kindly condescension and consideration which seemed to please him, and yet to make him very respectful. I gave Tommy'—the sham-butler—'an excellent character, saying that I had only parted with him because I was going to travel in the East for a couple of years. The party was quite satisfied, and quite agreeable to take him. Tommy got the place, was much liked, and remained there about two months. Then'—winking his eye—'there was a robbery of plate and jewels to a large amount. Tommy beat a speedy retreat, and I went to the States; and there Tommy met me. It was a good thing, a very good thing, was that plant, and a very simple one too. To this day, I don't believe the party has any idea that the noble lord in the

West End lodgings was a deceiver. He wrote to me to say how he had been robbed, and that he feared the butler had had a hand in the business. I replied—on paper with a coronet, if you please—that I was very sorry, but could hardly believe my old servant would have been guilty of such a crime. In these days the police were not very fly, and the whole affair was soon forgotten.

Another little adventure of the same kind which this ex-officer related of himself did not turn out quite so fortunate; or rather, as he expressed himself, he had 'very nearly come to grief.' He had gone to Paris, put up at a very good hotel, paid his way regularly, and had purchased from time to time a considerable quantity of jewellery at a fashionable shop; for which he had, as he expressed it, 'parted with the ready' to the extent of some two hundred pounds. When he thought that he had won the confidence of the shopkeeper, he ordered a number of bracelets, necklaces, and earrings, all of great value, to be sent to the hotel, intending to play off the old trick of taking the goods into another room for an imaginary lady—who was said to be ill in bed—to select from, and then to make off with the whole parcel. But the shopman who took the things to the hotel seemed to have some misgiving about the intending purchaser, and insisted upon following the latter into the inner room, where there was no lady at all, either sick or well. As the individual who told the story said of himself, he blundered over the affair, and did not deserve to succeed, for he ought to have secured assistance to work the affair properly. The shopman got angry and went away, threatening to expose him. But the intending thief was too sharp for him. He had already paid his hotel bill and had ordered a cab, so as to be ready for a start. He now took advantage of these preparations, and drove off to the Calais railway station, remained there a short time; then ordered another vehicle, made his way to the St Lazare station, got to Havre, and arrived safely in London.

But his regrets, when he told the story, at having expended two hundred pounds without making any profit, were curious to hear. Any one who listened to him, without hearing the first part of his story, would have imagined that he had lost the money in the most legitimate speculation. The company who heard his tale condoled with him, as if he was a merchant who had been unfortunate in some venture that he had tried and failed.

I was anxious to know what the company I was amongst thought of the London as compared with the French police in the work of detecting crime. But under the circumstances, it was a difficult matter to question them about. I was afraid to ask questions on the subject, lest I should be thought to display too much curiosity, and should awaken the suspicions of those amongst whom I was, and so cause them to suspect I was not one of themselves. But it so happened that I found the subject made easy for me. The newspapers had very lately been discussing the details of a robbery of bullion that had taken place on one of the French railways. To the company amongst whom I found myself, such a subject was as interesting and as certain to be dis-

cussed as the Two Thousand or the Derby would be at a sporting club. In this affair the thieves had been successful at first; but so soon as it became known, the French police had telegraphed to every seaport in France, and had set themselves to work in Paris to find out the culprits. They were successful, and managed to lay their hands upon the three men who had carried out the robbery. But this had been done in a manner which the company I was amongst that evening stigmatised as 'sneaking' and 'cowardly.'

'In England,' said one of those present, 'the police are hard upon a fellow when they catch him. But when they are trying to find the men they want, they are fair and above-board. They have no dirty spies; they act honourably. You can always tell pretty well when a plain-clothes officer is after you. But the French have a low, sneaking way of going to work. You never know but what the landlord of the hotel, or the waiter, or the porter, or the shopman who brings you a parcel, may not be a detective in disguise. No; give me Old England to do business in! Everybody here, even the police, is on the square.'

To this patriotic sentiment (!) there was a universal assent given.

'Yes,' said one of the party, who talked a good deal about Paris, and seemed, from what he said, to have 'done business' in that city to some extent; 'and that's not the worst of it. Why, I have known these French police employ women to spot down a fellow. There was two years ago a big affair in the Champs-Élysées. The chief hand in it was a New-Yorker called Johnson. He would have got clean away with everything, had it not been for a female with whom he associated. He was caught, and got what they call *travaux forcés* for ten years. He never could find out who it was that peached on him. But one of his French pals discovered, after he was taken, that this woman had been all along in the pay of the police, receiving money from them as well as from Johnson.—Do you call that fair-play?' he asked indignantly; to which a universal cry of 'Shame! shame!' was set up in reply.

There was one thing which struck me very forcibly throughout the evening I spent in what Frenchmen would call this eccentric company; and that was, how none of those present ever once compromised themselves by talking of any future 'business.' At any rate, such matters were never made a subject of general conversation. For some time after I first joined the party, I noticed that some one or other of them would go and talk to another individual in a low tone of voice; but those who thus spoke to one another evidently took great care that what they said should not be heard.

In England, we set great value upon the publicity given by the press to everything that takes place. The company in which I found myself on this memorable evening—or at any rate those with whom I spoke on the subject—praised this national peculiarity as much as, or even more than, most of us do. They said that the newspaper reports about 'plants' and the manner in which robberies are carried out, are, as a rule, the most utter rubbish; and that the daily accounts of what the police had or had not done in any particular case were of the utmost service

to them, and virtually kept them informed of what their enemies, the guardians of society, were doing. The more publicity given to all cases in which they were concerned, the better prepared were they to avoid places and persons that might be dangerous to their safety, from arrest and other troubles. Several of the party expressed themselves very earnestly to the effect that the English newspapers would always be allowed to publish the fullest details of what the police knew in cases of robbery. On the other hand, they abused the French government in no measured terms for not allowing similar intelligence to be made public; one of the company asking in a very sarcastic tone and manner, whether *that* was republican liberty, which put a stop to the press telling people facts which had really happened. From what was said on this subject, it would seem that the gentlemen who follow the profession of those amongst whom I found myself that night look upon publicity in all police inquiries as of the greatest use to them.

In the course of the evening I got my friend who had brought me to the place to ask one of the party, in a sort of offhand manner, whether he and his friends were not afraid of a detective officer coming amongst them and giving information to the authorities of all he saw and heard. The question was purposely put in a rather loud tone of voice, and at a moment when there was a lull in the general conversation, so that others might hear it. For answer, there was returned a general laugh; and then a burly, somewhat elderly man—who, if I may judge from his talk, must have had considerable experience in the profession—spoke up.

'Detectives!' said he. 'We don't fear no detectives here, in London. We know them all in their plain clothes, just as well as if they wore uniform. They acts on the square with us. They don't go a-making of themselves up to be what they ain't. They don't *tell* us what they are; but we know 'em well. Just let any one with eyes in his head go a-loading round the police courts for a minute or two, and he'll know every detective in London.' After a short pause, this individual—who was evidently a sort of oracle amongst his fellows—continued: 'There's one thing I will say for the plain-clothes officers, you can't "square" them; and it's no use trying to do so. But then you have them in another way; you know them at first sight; and it would only be a duffer of the first water that would allow himself to be taken in by them.'

To this my friend replied: 'Well, there *are* people who get taken in by them.'

'More fools they,' was the rejoinder. 'I don't think you'll find one of this ere company who has ever come to trouble through them, unless it were his own fault.'

As the night advanced, the persons who formed this assembly began to leave the place, singly and by twos and threes, bringing to a close the most extraordinary evening it was ever my lot to pass. On leaving the place, my friend linked his arm in mine, and took me through several narrow streets, none of which I recognised—crossing and turning very often—until all of a sudden we found ourselves on the south side of Lincoln's Inn Fields, and in a few minutes more were in Fleet Street. My companion,

knowing that I wrote for newspapers and periodicals, asked me, as a personal favour, not to give any account of the affair until at least a couple of years should have passed. This I promised to do. And as more than seven years have elapsed since I passed that evening amongst the agents of thieves, my promise has not been broken. As for the person who was my guide that night, I only saw him once or twice afterwards. He came to call on me in the winter of 1878, and told me he was about to sail for America, but would not be away more than four or five months. But from that day to this I have never heard a word about him, and cannot tell whether he is dead or alive.

SOME INSTANCES OF EASTERN TRADING.

THE inevitable necessity that a Levantine or Asiatic feels to ask more than double the actual value of his goods, and allow himself afterwards to be beaten down to something less than half what he originally asked, is a cause of bewilderment to the untravelled Briton, and a continual sore ranking in the bosom of the unwary tourist who has fallen a victim. It is not only the unlicensed hawker who takes his wares on board ships as they put in to the various ports along their route, and whose prices are merely a speculation as to how great an extent his customer may be imposed upon; but in the regular shops and markets, this system of haggling is perfectly recognised; and a trader who fixed a fair price on his goods, and kept to the one price, would run considerable risk of losing his entire custom, as the satisfaction of having beaten down a tradesman, and forced him to strike off something from his original price, gives an appreciable flavour to the transaction. As an instance of how ingrained is this idea of trading, I remember a story a friend of mine in the navy told me of a Greek messman on board his ship, who was paying his first visit to England. The first time he went on shore to buy provisions, he was in a butcher's shop, and inquired the price of some prime beef he saw hanging up. 'Fourteenpence a pound,' was the reply. 'I will give you eightpence,' said he, in perfect good faith, and without a minute's hesitation. This somewhat startled the butcher; and it was only after a considerable amount of difficulty that the Greek was made to understand that his system of trading was not in accordance with English ideas. For long afterwards, he spoke of English shopkeepers as 'wonderful people—they have but one price.'

But the ship's hawker or the small shopkeeper in the East is different. For a good thorough-paced scoundrel in trade, he carries off the palm. He looks at his customer, making up his mind how much he may ask him, which is usually about three times as much as he thinks he may get, that being about five hundred per cent. beyond the actual value of the article. The year before last, when I was quartered in Alexandria, I went into a small *boutique* to buy a trifle I saw in the window. I asked the price. 'Ten francs.' 'Nonsense!' I said. 'Five, sir'—'Two'—'One franc only.' Eventually, I bought it for two large piastres (fourpence-halfpenny). Not a bad instance that of a sudden fall in the prices.

But it is the passengers by the Peninsular and Oriental Company's steamers who are the most readily recognised objects for fleecing purposes; so much so, that a special expression has been strung together to denote one of this highly favoured victim band. A few days after I was sent out to Aden, I had the imprudence to go out shopping on the day that the Peninsular and Oriental boat called into that port. I inquired the price of a few ostrich feathers. 'Seventy rupees,' the man said. 'Do you take me for a Peninsular and Oriental passenger-fool?' I asked, having been instructed by old hands as to the little ways of these innocent Arab dealers, and the proper responses with which to meet them. 'I beg your pardon, sir,' he replied, and offered them to me for twenty-five rupees. I got them eventually for five.

But of all the stories of imposture of this description, none excels the following, which was told me by my naval friend mentioned above. Being on his way home from China, the ship put in at one of the Ceylon ports, and the usual crowd of hucksters invaded the ship. My friend had gone on shore, and only returned on board about half an hour before the time fixed for sailing. Coming out on deck, he was accosted by a be-turbaned, venerable old gentleman, who said he had some valuable stones for sale, if my friend would only look at them. He opened his case, and presented for inspection a small number of rubies and emeralds of various sizes, a fine collection of stones unset—the usual condition in which they are offered for sale in Ceylon—and said that the price was thirty pounds, apparently about their actual value out there. This was a large sum to my friend; so, after admiring the stones for some time, he said he was afraid he could not spend so much money. After considerable hesitation, and declaring that he should not make a penny by the transaction, the dealer lowered his price to twenty-nine pounds. My friend still considered, and was on the point of offering twenty-five pounds, as the stones would then have been a really good bargain, when the trader went down to twenty-eight pounds. My friend waited, and eventually twenty pounds was reached. A slight suspicion dawned over my friend's mind, and on the chance, he looked straight into the man's face and said: 'I will give you a shilling.' 'Very good, sir,' said the man, pocketed his shilling, handed in his 'precious stones,' and was over the side just in time before the ship got under weigh. The precious stones were mere glass.

'JERRY-BUILDING' IN THE MIDDLE AGES.

It has been generally thought that this peculiar style of building, that is outward show and inward rottenness, was a modern invention; but the public will be somewhat astonished to hear that a specimen of genuine jerry-work has recently been discovered in Peterborough Cathedral, of all places in the world. It will be remembered that early in 1883 certain ominous-looking rents and cracks showed themselves in the great central tower, and in the two eastern of the four great piers which supported it. After a careful survey by Mr Pearson, the architect of Truro Cathedral, it was determined at once

to take down the tower itself and these two piers; and it was during this operation that the amazing discovery was made that these great massive piers, which, with the two corresponding piers on the west, had to carry the enormous weight of the tower above, and which, of course, every one had supposed were of solid masonry, were found to be mere hollow shams—cases, in fact, so to speak, of Barnack ragstone, with no solid interior beyond a quantity of loose stones and rubble just thrown in, without mortar or packing, by which the outer casing of the piers was really weakened, instead of being in any way strengthened. This system was continued from top to bottom. Further investigations brought to light the fact that these great piers did not even rest on proper or firm foundations, but on sand and loose stones thrown in upon gravel, when a fine foundation on the solid rock might easily have been secured only two feet below. The two western piers were now examined, and were found to have been constructed in the same shameful manner; and it is almost a miracle that the tower has not collapsed long ago without sign or warning. Nothing but the strength and tenacity of the Barnack ragstone prevented so terrible a catastrophe.

All these four piers are now being rebuilt in the most substantial manner, and founded on the solid rock. The sum of twenty-one thousand pounds has already been secured for these restorations; but sixty-one thousand pounds will be required for the entire work, which it is proposed to raise by general subscriptions.

JULY.

SCARCELY a whisper stirs the summer leaves,
Or bends the whitening barley; sultry-fire,
The July sunshine beats upon the sward,
The brown-parched sward, whose scorching grass-
blades thirst
For the life-giving rain!

The fuchsias droop;
The full-blown roses drop their withering leaves;
The thrush sits mute upon the apple-bough;
A drowsy silence, an unnatural calm,
Pervades the face of nature!

In the fields,
The cattle idly lie beside the hedge,
Seeking for shelter from the sweltering heat;
The blackbird, tenant of the farmhouse porch,
Listless and dumb, sits in his wicker cage;
The house-dog, curled, lies blinking in the sun,
Careless of passing tramps.

Hark! What is that?
A threatening rumble, muttered, sullen, low,
In the far-distant sky; a thunder-peat,
Telling of welcome rain!

Anon the drops,
The thick big drops, in quick succession fall
Upon the parching earth: the flowers revive;
The house-dog rises; and the cattle crowd
Beneath the meadow trees; a gentle breeze
Springs up, and rustles through the barley-ears;
The sultry air is cooled: the fresh earth owns
The power beneficent of healing rain!

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